

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

July 11, 1952

### **Invitation to a Celebration**

Monday, July 7<sup>th</sup>, was the 106<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the raising of the American Flag at Monterey by Commodore John Drake Sloat of the United States Navy. On July 5, 1886, there was held a joint celebration in Monterey in commemoration of the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of American Independence and the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the taking possession of California, a history of which has been presented to the Monterey History and Art Association by Mrs. Lucia Stambaugh of San Mateo. The copy is the first of that occasion and date to be preserved in the archives of the association although a few copies of the program for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary have found their way to the Custom House Museum for preservation, and a number of the items from the 1946 observance of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary are in safe keeping there.

The book just acquired is a bound volume of thirty-four pages with several illustrations including a drawing of the grandstand at the Old Custom House, a photograph of Major Edwin A. Sherman, orator of the day; Carmel Mission, two of the Custom House, one a street view and the other from the waterfront and Del Monte Hotel.

The information contained in the book regarding this important celebration in July 5, 1886, begins with historical details that led up to the observance on that date and ends with invitations and acceptances. The first paragraph reads: "The first step taken for this celebration was at a regular meeting of the Associated Veterans of the Mexican War held in their hall on Bryant street near Third in San Francisco, on Thursday evening, May 13, 1886, when Major Edwin A. Sherman offered the following resolution:

"Resolved: "That a committee of five be appointed to take the necessary steps for a proper celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the taking possession of California and the raising of the American flag by Commodore John D. Sloat, of the United States Navy, July 7, 1846, the celebration to be held in Monterey."

The resolution was adopted and the president, Captain Samuel Deal, appointed Major Edwin A. Sherman, Colonels Andrew J. Coffee, A. Andrews, John W.

McKenzie and Captain Wm. L. Duncan, ex-president of the society, as said committee.

The committee proceeded to invite the citizens of Monterey, the California Pioneer Society, the Territorial Pioneers, the California Pioneer Society of Alameda and Contra Costa Counties and the Native Sons of the Golden West to unite with them in making the celebration a success and to form one general committee of arrangements. This was done and from Monterey were appointed: S.B. Gordon, W.J. Towle, A. Westfall, George Harris, Francis Doud, F.M. Hilby and Captain Thomas G. Lambert, who at that time was in charge of the Custom House.

Officiating on the program for the day were to be a group of 50 prominent men, including Dr. W. Ayer, whose name appears as the former owner of the souvenir book, Honorables T.J. Field, David Jacks, Felipe Gomez, Jessie D. Carr, all familiar names in early Monterey history.

Major General O.O. Howard, fully appreciating the importance of the celebration of this occasion, kindly offered the services of Light Battery K of the First Regiment of Artillery to fire the national salutes from the shore, while Captain C.L. Hooper, of the U.S. Revenue Service, volunteered the services of his vessel, the U.S. cutter Richard Rush, to perform the same duty upon the water in the harbor of Monterey. The Appomattox Drum Corps of Oakland offered their services for this occasion which was also received with thanks, according to the written report.

General M.G. Vallejo of Sonoma was appointed to raise the Spanish and Mexican flags and Captain J.B. Coghlan of the U.S. Navy to raise the American flag, receiving it from Master J.H. Whittemore Jr., a lad of ten years of age, and the great-grandson of Sloat, read his grandfather's original proclamation, which had been loaned for the occasion by the California Pioneer Society of San Francisco. John C. Fremont sent a telegram to Major Sherman, expressing his regrets at not being present and sent his congratulations to the pioneers and comrades.